



Accessing State Laws Online

Part 1- Introduction

This educational document was created by the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) for the purpose of assisting users of building codes that may also need to access state laws relating to the design, construction and use of buildings, and the activities of the state agencies involved in the development of building standards in Title 24. This 10-page document will provide an introduction to the process of using the Internet to access California state laws along with necessary background information.

We also have other educational materials at the CBSC website. They include:

- Guide to Title 24
- Guide to the Nonresidential CAL Green Code
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Glossary of Terms
- Accessing State Regulations Online
- Accessing State Legislation Online

Please visit our website for matters relating to the activities of the California Building Standards Commission including:

- Proposed building standards
- Online access to Title 24
- Meeting and hearing schedules
- Informational bulletins and announcements
- Newsletter, called the CAL Code Quarterly, and more.

Part 2- Background

First understand that California state laws and state regulations are not the same. State regulations are discussed in our educational document named [Accessing State Regulations Online](#), which is available on the CBSC website.

California state laws are enacted by the legislative process involving the Legislative and Executive Branches of State Government. The Legislative Branch consists of two houses of the state legislature; the State Senate and State Assembly. The Executive Branch consists of the Governor who may sign or veto legislative bills presented by the Legislature, or allow the legislation to become law without action. Learn much more about the legislative process in our [Accessing State Legislation Online](#), available at this CBSC website.

California has divided state laws into 29 separately named codes. The California Vehicle Code, Business and Professions Code, and Health and Safety Code, are three examples among the 29 codes of California state law. Here is a complete listing of the 29 codes of California state law.

Business and Professions Code	Insurance Code
Civil Code	Labor Code
Code of Civil Procedures	Military and Veterans Code
Commercial Code	Penal Code
Corporations Code	Revenue and Taxation Code
Education Code	Probate Code
Elections Code	Public Contract Code
Evidence Code	Public Resources Code
Family Code	Public Utility Code
Financial Code	Streets and Highways Code
Fish and Game Code	Unemployment Insurance Code
Food and Agricultural Code	Vehicle Code
Government Code	Water Code
Harbors and Navigation Code	Welfare and Institutions Code
Health and Safety Code	

The Government Code, Health and Safety Code, Business and Professions Code, Education Code, Public Resources Code, Water Code, Penal Code and the Food and Agricultural Code, contain provisions relating to buildings, or specific areas or feature of buildings depending on the use of the building. These state laws provide the authority for

various state agencies to adopt or develop building standards (a type of state regulation) that are found in the California Building Standards Code, in Title 24, California Code of Regulations. Here is a listing of the state laws most commonly used in relation to building standards, and building design, construction and use:

- Health and Safety Code, Division 13, Part 2.5, spanning from Section number 18901 to 18949.31, known as the **California Building Standards Law**. The body of state law establishes the California Building Standards Commission, the basis for California Building Standards Code in Title 24, California Code of Regulations, and many mandates for local government.
- Health and Safety Code, Division 13, Part 1.5, spanning from Section 17910 to 17998.3, known as the **State Housing Law**. Requires the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Office of the State Fire Marshal to develop building standards for Title 24 on regulating housing occupancies. Includes many mandates to be carried out by local government.
- Government Code, Sections 12955 through 12955.1.1, establishing accessibility requirements in multifamily dwellings, and the requirement for the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop building standards for accessibility in and about privately funded multifamily dwellings, and for the Division of the State Architect to develop building standards for accessibility in and about publicly funded housing.
- Government Code Section 4450 through 4461, establishing accessibility requirements in public buildings and sidewalks, and requires the Division of the State Architect to develop the building standards for such buildings and sidewalks.
- Health and Safety Code, Division 13, Parts 5.3 and 5.5, spanning from Section 19952 through 19959.5, establishing accessibility requirements in privately funded buildings open to the public and for commercial facilities, and requires the Division of the State Architect to develop the building standards for such buildings.
- Health and Safety Code, Division 12, Part 2, spanning from Section 13100 through 13263, establishing fire and panic safety requirements, and requires the Office of the State Fire Marshal to develop building standards and other regulations.

Provided above were the most commonly used provisions of California state law relating to buildings. There are others that are less common to the work relating to building codes. All the state laws that authorize or require the development of building standards are listed in Authority and Reference citations of Sections 102 through 114 of the California Building Code, which is Part 2 of Title 24, California Code of Regulations. There the specific sections of the various state laws are provided.

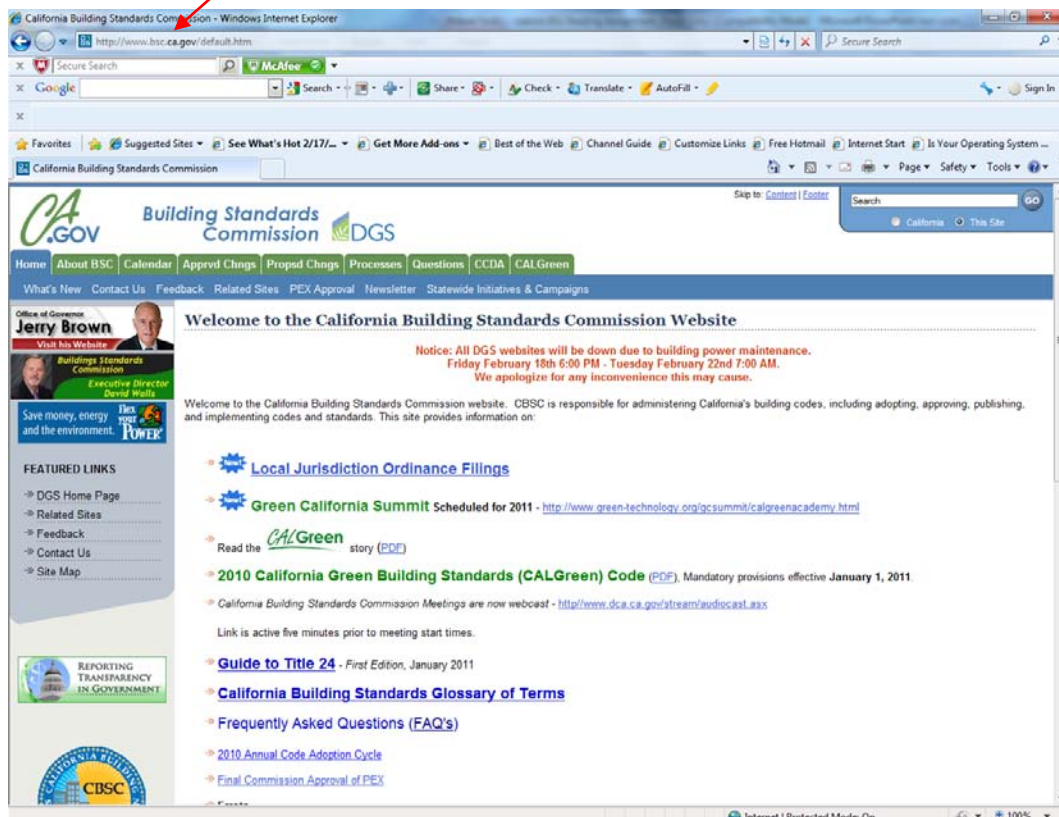
California state laws may be accessed in public libraries, private law offices, and through the California state website. Let's learn how to access state laws through the California state website. It is easier than you may think.

Part 3-Accessing California State Laws through the Internet

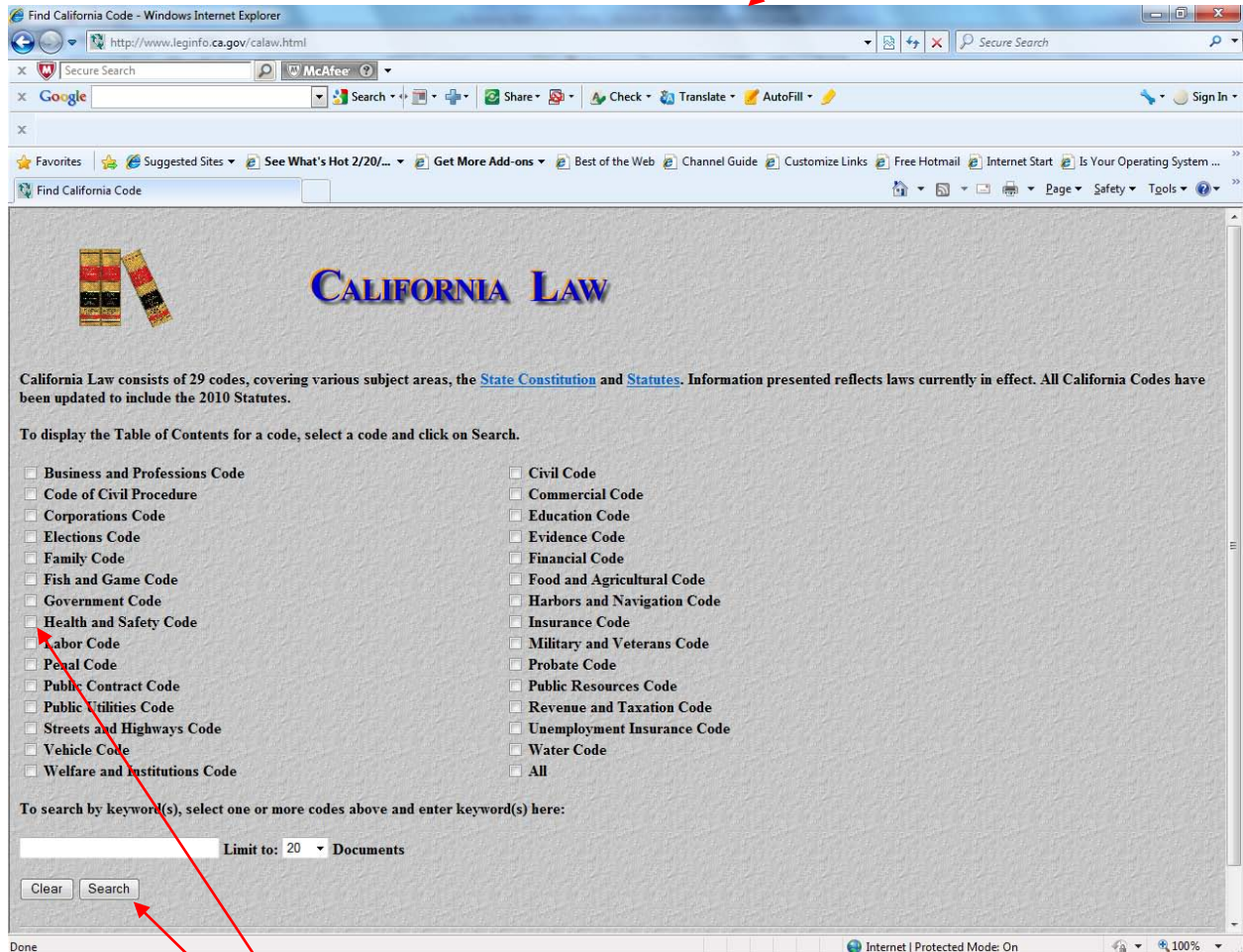
An index of the 29 codes of California state laws is provided at the state's website. From any Internet webpage, enter (type in) the state law website address

<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>.

We have used the front page of the California Building Standards Commission website as a starting point. You can use any website you wish. Just type in the state law website address <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html> in this space and press your enter key. The results are shown on the next page.



The state website address for state laws will bring you to this California Law page. It provides access to the 29 codes of California law. See the listing of the 29 code names as previously discussed?



We are able to select any one of the codes to access. Just click in the box to the left of the desired code name. Next, click on the "Search" key. Let's assume we have clicked on the Health and Safety Code and Search key for our next step to be shown on the next page.

CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=hsc&codebody=&hits=20

Secure Search

Google

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McAfee

Search

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California Health and Safety Code

CALIFORNIA LAW

CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE

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Internet | Protected Mode: On

This is the first page of many for the Health and Safety Code because of its size. If you know the section number of the law you wish to read, simply scroll down until you find the section number set that will include the section number you are seeking.

These are section numbers or section number sets. Each is a link to those sections of the Health and Safety Code shown.

CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=hsc&codebody=&hits=20

Secure Search

Google

Secure Search

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Search

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California Health and Safety Code

CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE

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Internet | Protected Mode: On

For example if you wanted to access Health and Safety Code Section 18941.5, you will need to scroll down to the link provided for section number set 18935-18944.11, that would include Section 18941.5. If you click on that link it will take you to those sections as shown on the next page.

CA Codes (hsc18935-18944.11) - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=hsc&group=18001-19000&file=18935-18944.11

Secure Search

Google

CA Codes (hsc18935-18944.11)

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 18935-18944.11

18935. (a) Notice of proposed building standards shall be given and hearings shall be held by the adopting agencies, as required by the Administrative Procedure Act, prior to the adoption of the building standards and submission to the commission for approval. The notice of proposed building standards and the initial statement of reasons for the proposed building standards shall comply with Article 5 (commencing with Section 11346) of Chapter 3.5 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code. The adopting agency or state agency that proposes the building standards shall submit the notice and initial statement of reasons for proposed building standards to the California Building Standards Commission, which shall review them for compliance with Article 5 (commencing with Section 11346) of Chapter 3.5 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the commission determines that the adopting agency or state agency that proposes the building standards has complied with Article 5 (commencing with Section 11346) of Chapter 3.5 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, the commission shall approve the notice and initial statement of reasons for proposed building standards, and submit them to the Office of Administrative Law for the sole purpose of inclusion in the California Regulatory Notice Register. The Office of Administrative Law shall publish only those notices of proposed building standards which have been approved by, and submitted to, the office by the California Building Standards Commission.

(b) In order to ensure an absence of conflict between hearings and a maximum opportunity for interested parties to be heard, no hearings by adopting agencies shall be conducted unless the time and place thereof has been approved in writing by the commission prior to public notices of the hearing being given by the adopting agencies.

(c) If, after building standards are submitted to the commission for approval, the commission requires changes therein as a condition for approval, and the changes are made, no additional hearing by the affected state agency shall be required in connection with making the changes when the commission determines the changes are nonsubstantial, solely grammatical in nature, or are sufficiently related to the text submitted to the commission for approval that the public was adequately placed on notice that the change could result from the originally proposed building standards.

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On

Again, by clicking on the set 18935-18944.11, you are taken to this page. To find your desired Section 18941.5, simply scroll down to find it. Section 18941.5 is shown on below.

CA Codes (hsc18935-18944.11) - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=hsc&group=18001-19000&file=18935-18944.11

Secure Search

Google

CA Codes (hsc18935-18944.11)

commission shall be incorporated into the code and shall not be incorporated into other individual titles of state agencies in the California Code of Regulations.

18941. All building standards shall be administered and enforced and, whenever practicable, written on a performance basis consistent with state and nationally recognized standards for building construction in view of the use and occupancy of each structure to preserve and protect the public health and safety.

18941.5. (a) (1) Amendments, additions, and deletions to the California Building Standards Code, including, but not limited to, green building standards, adopted by a city, county, or city and county pursuant to Section 18941.5 or pursuant to Section 17958.7, together with all applicable portions of the California Building Standards Code, shall become effective 180 days after publication of the California Building Standards Code by the commission, or at a later date after publication established by the commission.

(2) The publication date established by the commission shall be no earlier than the date the California Building Standards Code is available for purchase by the public.

(b) Neither the State Building Standards Law contained in this part, nor the application of building standards contained in this section, shall limit the authority of a city, county, or city and county to establish more restrictive building standards, including, but not limited to, green building standards, reasonably necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions. The governing body shall make the finding required by Section 17958.7 and the other requirements imposed by Section 17958.7 shall apply to that finding. Nothing in this section shall limit the authority of fire protection districts pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 13869.7. Further, nothing in this section shall require findings required by Section 17958.7 beyond those currently required for more restrictive building standards related to housing.

18941.6. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this part, ordinances and programs adopted on or before January 1, 1993, that contain standards to strengthen potentially hazardous buildings pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 8875.2 of the Government Code, shall incorporate the building standards in Appendix Chapter 1 of the Uniform Code for Building Conservation of the International

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On

Here is Section 18941.5 of the California Health and Safety Code. You may read the section, or block it and print that selection, or just click your print key and the entire section number set will be printed.

That is all there is to it! A little practice and you can be cruising through California's state laws with ease.

There are some additional tools provided on the California Law website that can be helpful when you don't know the section number you need. Go back to the screen shown on page 5 above and note the keyword search function. Instructions are provided, but simply select one code, then enter a word in the keyword search box and click on the Search key. The system will search for Sections containing that word. This is a time consuming search, but when you don't know the section number, it may be the only way to find what you need.

The screenshot shows the 'Find California Code' page in a Windows Internet Explorer browser. The page title is 'Find California Code - Windows Internet Explorer' and the URL is 'http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html'. The page features the 'CALIFORNIA LAW' logo and a list of 29 California codes. The 'Health and Safety Code' is selected with a checkmark. Below the list, there is a search box containing the text 'Fire Alarm', a 'Limit to: 20' dropdown menu, and 'Documents' text. A 'Search' button is visible. Two yellow callout boxes with red arrows provide instructions: one points to the 'Health and Safety Code' selection and the search box, stating that 'Fire Alarm' was entered and the results are shown on the next screen; the other points to the 'Limit to: 20' dropdown menu, stating that the site defaults to limiting the number of sections listed and that this amount can be increased using the pull-down menu.

Here we selected the Health and Safety Code and entered the words "Fire Alarm" within the keyword space and clicked the Search key. The results are shown on the next screen.

The site defaults to limit the number of sections to be listed. However, you may increase this amount using this pull-down menu.

Our search found the listed sections of the Health and Safety Code with the words "Fire Alarm". Next you click on the links to the listed sections (one at a time). Here ten sections are listed and there is an additional 10 sections listed on page 2.

I want to [search](#) again.

A total of 20 code section group(s) were found and are presented in an order that n

Results for page 1 of 2 (Max of 10 documents per page).

1. [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 13100-13135](#) : 73886 bytes.
2. [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 13140-13147](#) : 44753 bytes.
3. [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 13195-13199](#) : 8420 bytes.
4. [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 12720-12728](#) : 10713 bytes.
5. [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 12580-12608](#) : 14061 bytes.
6. [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 13155-13159.4](#) : 4485 bytes.
7. [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 13000-13011](#) : 15559 bytes.
8. [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 13210-13217](#) : 7268 bytes.
9. [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 12000-12007](#) : 12349 bytes.
10. [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 13137-13139](#) : 5447 bytes.

Go to page: 1 of 2

[Home Page](#) [Feedback](#) [Help](#)

The process described above is slow and may require some time to find the section of state law you are searching for.

Part 4- Conclusion

Here are some good rules to remember when working with laws.

1. When using state laws, be aware of the identity of the code, part, division, chapter etc. to be certain you are in the proper location for the desired subject.

2. Look for and read any section named "application and scope", "application", "scope", "intent", "purpose", or similar words. Such a section is generally located near the beginning of a code segment (chapter, division, part, etc.) to explain what the provisions of the segment apply. For example, a segment may be said to apply to only high-rise buildings. You don't want to apply those provisions to buildings that are not high-rise buildings by definition.

3. Look for definitions of terms. This is generally provided near the beginning of a code segment (chapter, division, part etc.). This is very important. Some words and terms are defined specifically for the purpose of that particular code segment, and the same words and terms may be defined differently in other segments of the code.

We recommend practicing the steps provided in this document in order to become completely familiar with the process. Good luck.

Contact our office if additional clarification is needed.

Building Standards Commission
2525 Natomas Park Drive, Suite 130
Sacramento, CA 95833

Phone: (916) 263-0916

Fax: (916) 263-0959

Email: cbsc@dgs.ca.gov

We welcome your feedback. Use our feedback feature on our CBSC website.

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